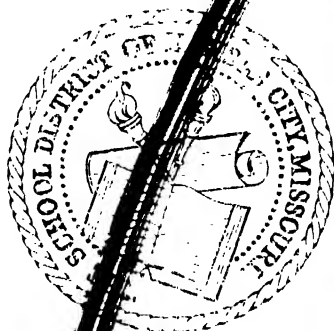


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# HARLECH CASTLE

OFFICIAL GUIDE



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HARLECH CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH

# HARLECH CASTLE

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# HARLECH CASTLE

## PART I

### HISTORY OF THE CASTLE

THE history of the Castle of Harlech begins with the events following the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last native Prince of Wales to bear rule, and that of his brother David in 1282-3, when Edward I built a chain of castles round the coast of North Wales in order to carry out his schemes for the subjection and organization of the country.

The tradition recorded in the early mediaeval manuscripts known as the *Mabinogion*, makes Harlech the dwelling place of Bran Fendigaid—(Bran the blessed)—and describes him as being at his court there, "sitting upon the rock of Harlech," and looking over the sea, watching the fleet from Ireland which brought King Matholwch as a suitor to Branwen his sister.

Large numbers of hut circles and enclosures afford abundant evidence of the early occupation of the hillsides which look down upon the present town, and it is quite possible that on the castle rock there was an early fortress contemporary with these, and similar to the many "British camps" which crown the lower hilltops of North Wales, and were occupied during the first centuries of the Christian Era.

Criccieth Castle across the bay is still encircled by the earthen banks and ditches of an early camp.

Although it is, therefore, quite likely that there was an early residence on the rock, no vestige now remains of any occupation earlier than the present castle. The ramparts of a camp—on such a site as this, composed of dry walling—would have been the first material to be used in the construction of a stone castle.

Another tradition names Harlech "Caer Collwyn," after Collwyn ap Tangno, the founder of the fifth tribe of North

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Wales, from whom many families of the district derive their descent; but there is nothing in recorded Welsh history to prove an occupation of the castle rock before the thirteenth century.

After the advance of Edward I to Conway in March, 1283, he sent an army, under Otto Grandison and John Vescy, to march along the coast through Carnarvon to Harlech, keeping up communications by sea. No permanent works of fortification are likely to have been begun in this year, and as the grant of a free borough to Harlech only dates from 1284, it is probable that the defences of Carnarvon and Conway took precedence of those of Harlech. This is borne out by the Pipe Roll of 14 Edward I, which contains the account of expenses on the North Welsh towns and castles from 13th January, 1283, to 7th January, 1286. Only £205 17s. 1½d. is entered as spent on Harlech, and all of it is for the making of the rock-cut ditch in front of the castle, the period of work being from 27th May to 4th November, 1285. There are no payments for masonry work at this date.

Edward himself twice stayed at Harlech in 1284, in May and in October.

It may be argued, from the wording of the entries, that some pre-Edwardian stronghold must have existed, since a ditch cannot be cut in front of a castle if there is no castle in front of which to cut it. And in this connexion it is apposite to quote an entry in the Chancery Rolls of 21st October, 1284, which states that the King has committed to Hugh Longslow during pleasure the Castle of "Hardelawe" with the armour, etc., and has granted him £100 yearly for the custody, on condition that he shall have continuously in garrison there at his cost 30 fencible men, of whom 10 shall be crossbowmen, a chaplain, an artiller, a smith, a carpenter and a mason, and from the others shall be made janitors, watchmen and other necessary ministers. Such an establishment could not have existed without buildings, and yet there is no record of any building work at Harlech till 1285. In October, 1285, Longslow was ordered to hand over the castle to John Bevillard to hold after the same manner. Bevillard brought his wife with him, and they were allowed 4s. a day between them, with 10 footmen at 3d. a day, and 10 at 2d., "which footmen shall dwell in garrison of the castle in order to be intendent and responent to John as keepers of the castle."

The explanation that this refers to the temporary occupation of another site will not serve, in view of the reference to the rock-cut ditch, which can hardly be other than that which now defends the castle on its east front. An occupation of the present site must be assumed in temporary buildings which were replaced as soon as possible by those that now exist.

In 1288, the Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England was commissioned to survey the King's castles in North Wales, and mandates to receive him were issued to the constables of Aberconway, Bere, Builth, Carnarvon, Criccieth, Dryslwyn, Harlech and Montgomery. The report of this survey seems not to be extant. Bevillard was dead by 1290, when his widow Agnes was ordered to hand over the castle to James Saint George and he in turn delivered it to Robert Staundon in 1293.

The extant building accounts show that while the castle ditch was cut in 1285, no masonry was built till 1286, or three years after the Conquest; but when once begun the work was carried on quickly, and was practically finished by 1290. The large sum spent on the castle at this time, £8,392 9s. 7½d., points to this conclusion, and except for the advanced details of parts of the gatehouse, nothing to the contrary is suggested by the building itself. The reasons which delayed the work at Carnarvon in 1287—perhaps connected with the revolt of the South Wales chieftain, Rhys ap Iaredudd, evidently did not exist at Harlech; and there is nothing in any later document to show that when the large payments ceased in 1290, any important part of the castle was left unfinished. By 1298 small repairs to the roofs of the towers, obviously the last parts of the building to be completed, were needed, and by 1319 several of the lead roofs had been renewed. The North-west or Chapel Tower needed considerable repair in lead and timber by 1321, and the Prison Tower was in even worse condition by 1343; the chapel also was "weak and ruinous."

The building of the castle being spread over a comparatively short time seems to have proceeded, with one important modification, according to the original plan. The rock-cut ditch being completed, the lines of the inner, and middle and outer wards were laid out, and the main or eastern front of the castle, with the gatehouse and the two angle towers,

was carried up, the curtains between having a width of 10 ft. and 12 ft. 6 ins. The north, south and west walls of the inner ward were then proceeded with, with 8-ft. curtains, as being less liable to attack; but before they had been carried up very far it was decided to thicken them to 10 ft., the west wall on the outside, the other two on the inside. The two western towers are of the same work as the thickening, and are in several ways of different character from the eastern towers. With this exception, it is not possible to establish a sequence of work in the castle.

During the rising of Madoc ap Llywelyn in 1294-5, Harlech was besieged, but as the castle, garrisoned by thirty-seven men, resisted all attacks and was soon relieved, its defences were evidently in working order, and in May, 1296, six Scottish prisoners, captured at the battle of Dunbar, were placed in it for safe custody.

No further test was made of the strength of the castle until the first years of the fifteenth century, when Owen Glyndwr at the head of a national rising for a time controlled all North Wales.

It is with his name above all others that Harlech Castle is associated in history.

Owen took up arms in 1400 and proceeded to carry on a guerilla warfare against the Marcher lords, backed at times by the forces of Henry IV. An attack on Harlech in December, 1401 was only averted by the despatch of 100 men at arms and 400 archers from Chester to its relief. Glyndwr retained control of the country, however, and matters grew steadily worse for the garrison, which in 1403 consisted of 10 men at arms and 30 archers, the cost of whose upkeep for a year amounted to £389 6s. 8d.

In June of this year the Prince of Wales headed an expedition to relieve Harlech and Aberystwyth, and the still extant accounts record among his expenses the cost of the bullocks taken with him to feed the Harlech garrison.

In October, 1403, a force of French and Bretons landed in South Wales and did much damage; but eventually, being foiled by the Castles of Carmarthen and Kidwelly, they coasted up the shores of Wales in a fleet of armed vessels, and in November endeavoured to capture Carnarvon. The attempt was a failure, as was a more serious joint attack by Owen and the French in January, 1404, but a crisis

had been reached at Harlech. In the previous October the garrison had become disorderly and mutinous, and suspicion was awakened that William Hunt, the Constable, was preparing to surrender the castle to the Welsh, when a resolute band amongst the soldiers seized him, "for sum thinges that thae fonde with hym," and took the keys from him. His place was taken by two others, "Sir Lewis" and "Fevian Colier." Hunt was kept a close prisoner in the castle for three months, but pestilence and desertion greatly weakened the garrison. Some died; others deserted to the enemy; others attempted to make their way to England, but were caught and killed on the way; and so it came about that, while the attack was preparing against Carnarvon, the garrison of Harlech Castle had almost dwindled away to nothing, while the Constable had been lying for three months under suspicion of treason, a helpless prisoner in the hands of his subordinates. On Tuesday, January 8th, 1404, Hunt, with two yeomen, named "Jak Mercer" and "Harry Baker," managed to leave the castle, and entered into treaty with the rebels under "Howel Vaghan." They took no precautions for their safety, and the three were at once seized and carried off by the Welsh.

The garrison was now reduced to five Englishmen and about sixteen Welsh. Colier was sick and nearly dead of fever, but "Sir Lewis" held out desperately, and sent word, by a man of Criccieth, to Conway, in the hope that some help might come.

Eventually Owen himself went to Harlech and opened further negotiations with the garrison. All but seven of them agreed to give up the castle in return for a certain sum of money, and a day was fixed for the surrender, which was duly carried out.

The capture of Harlech marked the turning point in Glyndwr's fortunes, which now began their steady decline.

For the next three years, however, he made it his capital and on one occasion summoned a parliament to meet here.

The castle became the home of his family, including his son-in-law, Sir Edmund Mortimer, whose tragic life came to an end by privation during, or immediately after, the siege of the fortress which ended in its capture in 1408. It was taken by Gilbert and John Talbot at the head of a force of a thousand men and a long siege train.

Among the prisoners were Owen's wife, Margaret Hanmer, and his daughter, Mortimer's wife, with her four children.

In the course of clearing the middle ward in the spring of 1923, there was found an object which can with some confidence be connected with this stage of the castle's history. It is a gilt bronze boss from the martingale of a set of horse harness, and bears the arms *four lions rampant quarterly counterchanged or and gules*, assumed by Owen Glyndwr as Prince of Wales.

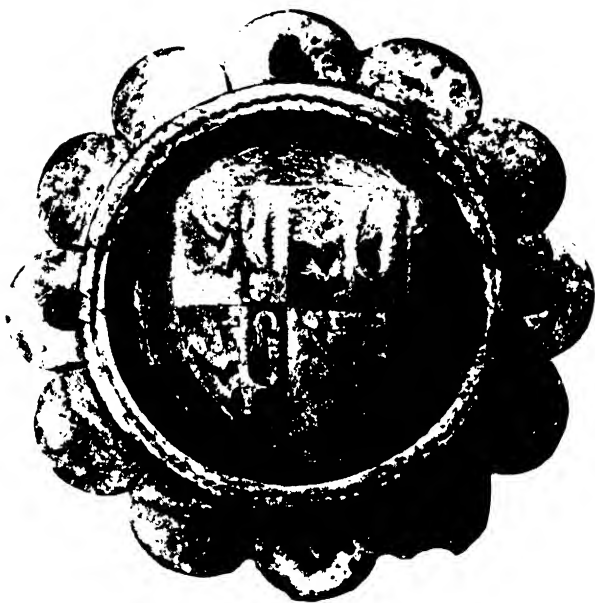
The style of the heraldry fits well with the date, and the find is of much importance as being one of the few surviving genuine relics of Owen. It is to be noted that the lions are *rampant*—as on Owen's seal and as used in earlier representations of the arms—not *passant* as shown in the modern arms used for Wales.

An echo of the siege is heard in 1415 when Gerard Strong petitions for a discharge for the metal of a cannon called the "King's Daughter" burst at the siege of Harlech—perhaps it was for this gun that some of the stone balls discovered in clearing the castle were made. The diameter of the largest is 22 inches, 4 inches greater than that of the largest shells made in Britain during the war of 1914-18.

The fear of further trouble in Wales led to the castles being kept strongly garrisoned for a long period after the final defeat of Glyndwr. Harlech did not, however, come again into prominence until 1460 when Queen Margaret fled to Wales after the capture of Henry VI at the battle of Northampton, and "came to the castle of Harlech . . . and she "had many great gifts and was greatly comforted; for she had "need thereof, for she had a full easy many<sup>1</sup> about her the "number of four persons . . . And there hence she removed "full privately unto the Lord Jasper lord and earl of "Pembroke, for she durst not abide in no place that was "open but in private." Before the end of the year she had reached Scotland. The castle, however, remained in Lancastrian hands for eight years more; its constable being Dafydd ap Ieuan ap Einion. In 1468 Jasper Tudor landed at Barmouth and marched to Denbigh, where he took possession of the town but not of the castle. He was, however, defeated there by Sir Richard Herbert; and Lord Herbert, who had been appointed Constable of Harlech by Edward IV in 1464 to supersede Dafydd ap Ieuan, coming northwards from

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<sup>1</sup> That is, a very small "meinie," or retinue.



GILT BRONZE BOSS BEARING THE ARMS  
OF OWEN GLYNDWR

*From Transactions of the Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion,*  
1922





Pembroke, joined his brother Sir Richard in besieging Harlech Castle, and after a short siege received its surrender on August 14th, in spite of the fact that "that castylle ys so stronge that men sayde that hyt was impossybylle unto any man to gete hyt."

Dafydd ap Ieuan's connexion with Harlech will be remembered for his boast that he had kept a castle so long in France that he had made all the old women in Wales talk about him, and would keep this castle so long that he would make all the old women in France talk of him. The name of the French castle, in spite of the old women, has unfortunately not come down to us, nor does Dafydd's name occur in the lists of Welshmen who distinguished themselves in the French Wars. But at least he had the satisfaction of being by a long way the last Lancastrian to surrender a castle in England or Wales to the Yorkists.

It is curious that for so long a time no determined effort was made to capture Harlech, as it provided the Lancastrians with an invaluable link with Ireland and Scotland.

By the end of the fifteenth century the castles of North Wales had outlived their original purpose of maintaining English garrisons, and except for possible use in war time had become little more than gaols for local felons and debtors.

As a result great parts of them had fallen out of use and become "moche ruinous and ferre in decaye for lakke of tymely reparacions." A sixteenth century survey of Harlech shows this very clearly. It is dated 1564, but is probably some thirty years older. All the buildings in the inner ward, the hall, chapel, kitchen, etc., were in complete ruin, and three out of the four angle towers were roofless. The north-east or Debtor's Tower (the Prison Tower of 1321 and 1343) was still roofed, obviously because of its use as a gaol, and the gatehouse also, though its roofs were in bad condition. The entrance had lost its two drawbridges, their place being taken by planks laid across from pier to pier.

In Elizabeth's reign the Assizes were held at Harlech, the judges lodging in the castle—doubtless in the gatehouse—and therefore certain repairs must have been done from time to time. In 1609, Harlech is described in an official survey as, "decayed, savinge some fewe roomes wch serve the justices "of Assize to lie in when they come thether," although about five years earlier it was "as yet kepte in somme better

"reparacion than anye of his majesty's castles in Northwalles, "by reason that the Justices of ye assize, Sheriffe plenotarye, "with their trayne, doe vse, when the assises are kepte in "that Towne, to lie and keepe ther diet within the said "Castle. At which tyme the said Castle is aired, scowred, "cleansed, and some charges bestowed by euery Sheriffe, "towards the reparacion thereof at euery time they doe "vse to resorte thither to keepe the Sessions."

The Civil Wars once more brought the castle into use. It was held for the King by Colonel William Owen, and in 1646 stood a siege by Colonel John Jones, the regicide and brother-in-law of Cromwell, and Major Moore. It surrendered to Major-General Mytton, March 15th, 1647, its garrison consisting of between forty and fifty officers and men. This was the end of its active history of a little more than three and a half centuries, and once again it was the last stronghold in England and Wales to hold out for the King.

An eighteenth century description preserved in the National Library at Aberystwyth says that the Oliverians "defaced the castle, destroying the two stairs in the gatehouse, and battering the west wall of the inner ward from the sea with cannon." How far the ruinous state of the castle is due to the siege must remain doubtful, but it appears from a letter written by Edward Wynne about this time, that the Parliamentary Committee sitting at Denbigh ordered him and Edward Jones to see the castle demolished. Fortunately, this order never took effect, and the castle was allowed to remain, roofless and floorless, to our own times, surviving chiefly on account of the excellence of its materials.

In recent years various repairs have been made, the most noticeable being the renewal of the arches in the entrance passage through the gatehouse, and the west doorway of the gatehouse chapel, but the modern additions elsewhere are fortunately small.

The charge of the castle, until 1914, has been in the hands of H.M. Office of Woods and Forests, and since that date in those of H.M. Office of Works and Public Buildings.





Those who wish to study the history and architecture of the castle in greater detail will find the following works of value. They have been freely drawn upon in the compilation of this guide and acknowledgment is hereby made :—

“ History of England under Henry IV.” J. H. Wylie, 1884–1898.

“ The Welsh Wars of Edward I.” J. E. Morris, 1901.

“ The Mediaeval Boroughs of Snowdonia.” E. A. Lewis, 1912.

“ Harlech Castle.” H. Harold Hughes, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1913.

“ Wales and the Wars of the Roses.” Howell T. Evans, 1915.

“ Harlech Castle.” C. R. Peers, *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1921–2.

For the general development of castles in Britain, “ Mediaeval Military Architecture in England,” by G. T. Clark, 1884, and “ Military Architecture in England during the Middle Ages,” by A. Hamilton Thompson, 1912, should be consulted.

## PART II

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

*Note.*—The names printed in capitals will be found marked on the plan and, where practicable, on the building itself.

The castle is entered from the CASTLE GREEN by a CAUSEWAY which crosses the MOAT and leads through the small OUTER GATE directly to the great GATEHOUSE.

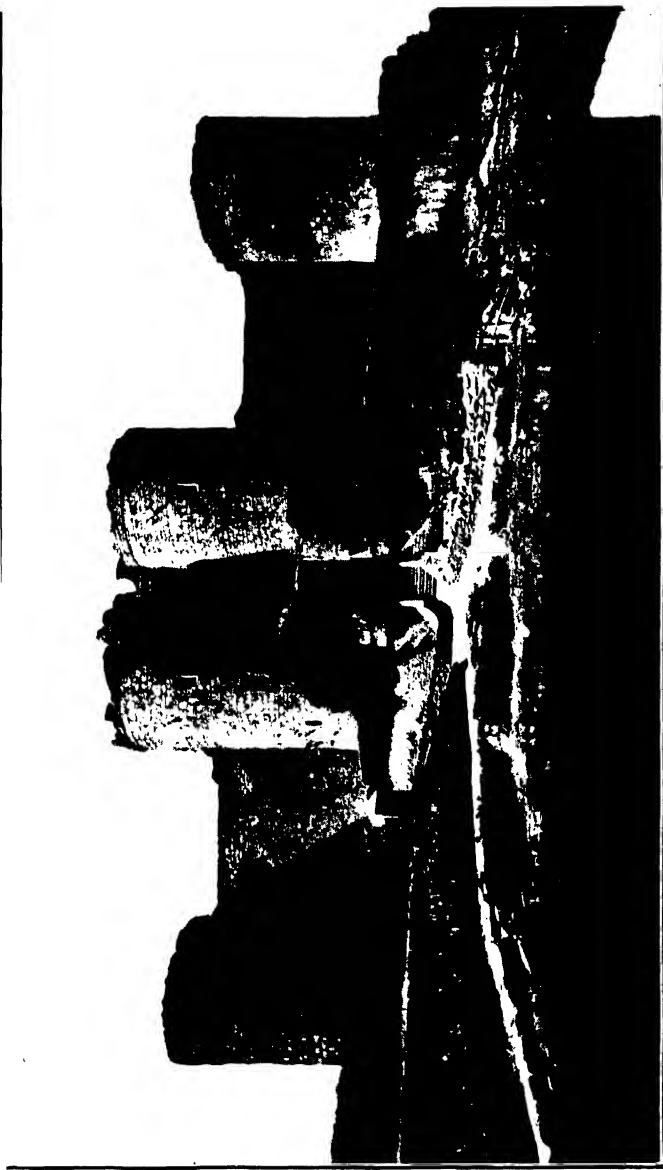
The MOAT bounds the eastern and southern sides of the castle, and the cutting of it was the first task to be undertaken when the building of the castle was begun, over £200 being spent upon this work between May and November, 1285. Somewhere at the south-east corner there was, as early as 1343, a garden in the most sheltered and sunny place that could be found. At each end were doorways leading to the outer ward.

The present CAUSEWAY takes the place of "an Arche of stone, " rising from the bottom of the ditch, battlemented on bothe sides, in " the midds between the grene and the Castle," as it was described in the sixteenth century survey. A drawbridge spanned the gap between this arch and the outer bank of the ditch, where some form of bridgehead or BARBICAN must have existed on the spot now occupied by the turnstile, and a second drawbridge joined the bridge to the outer gate. In the sixteenth century both drawbridges had been replaced by planks. The position of the inner drawbridge can be seen on the face of the OUTER GATE, and its floor level is marked by a projecting course on the sides of the gateway passage; the present steps and the arch over them are modern, and are made in the pit of the drawbridge, the existing causeway across the ditch being 7 ft. below the original entrance level. The gateway arch is flanked by corbelled half-round turrets, and there was an embattled parapet above, reached by stairs set against the wall north of the gate, of which only a few steps are now to be seen.

After passing through the outer gate the narrow MIDDLE WARD (*see* p. 18) is crossed, and the INNER WARD entered through the GATEHOUSE, which contains the principal living rooms of the castle, and, when it was first built in about 1290, was designed to form the residence of the constable. In the early years of the fifteenth century it provided quarters for Owen Glyndwr and for a time during the Wars of the Roses







HARLECH CASTLE FROM THE EAST

Henry VI's Queen, Margaret of Anjou, made her home here. Here too, in Elizabeth's reign, the Judges of Assize had their lodgings.

As was always the case in mediaeval buildings of this type, the main living rooms were on the first and upper floors, the basements being used as offices, store-rooms, etc.

The GATEHOUSE is of three storeys, with a central gateway flanked by half-round towers; on the west side it is rectangular in plan, with round stair turrets projecting from the north-west and south-west angles. The passage to which the gate opens is divided into two parts, the inner and outer entries, the outer having been furnished with two portcullises, the gates of which worked up into a chapel in the first floor. The inner entry had doors at each end, and had also a portcullis at the western end, though this was done away with by an alteration in the arrangements of the first floor. The outer end was closed by a pair of half doors opening outwards, their profile is indicated by recesses in the tower on either side. The line followed by the modern arch is too low. Both entries were spanned by arched ribs, now represented by modern arches, between which were holes, known as meurtrières or murder-holes, through which assailants could be attacked from above. The outer entry was commanded by narrow window-slits from the rooms in the ground floor of the towers, and the drawbar hole for the outer gate can be seen on the south side, running right through the wall into the room in the south tower. As the principal rooms looked into the inner ward on three sides they were well lighted by traceried windows. The rooms in the towers on the east side were of necessity less well lighted, and had narrow square-headed windows heavily barred with iron, as were all the windows in the outer walls. But all the rooms on the upper floors, and one on the ground floor, had hooded fireplaces, and would have provided very convenient living rooms. The ground floor served for guard-rooms and storage; the two square upper rooms on the north side were the porter's lodge in the sixteenth century, while the first-floor room on the south was then used as a hall, with a large chamber of equal size above it. Originally the stair-turrets provided the only access to the first floor, but at some time before the date of the sixteenth century survey a "stately stayre" was added on the west, leading into the hall by a doorway over the inner entry; this stair still exists, though it is in great part a rough modern rebuilding. The principal rooms were lighted by two-light traceried windows, of which only two, those on the second floor in the east and west walls, preserve their original proportions and parts of their tracery; the remaining six, all in the west wall, have had their heads lowered to the former springing line of the tracery, and the space above, up to the relieving arches, filled with ashlar. Glass grooves may be seen in the window heads, but have never existed in the jambs, which were fitted with wood shutters. In spite of the fact that the section of the window jambs is of a somewhat advanced character, these windows are clearly part of the original work, and must date from about 1290. The gatehouse was served by garderobes on the north-east and south-east, at the junction with the curtains (*see* p. 17).

On the first floor over the outer entry is a chapel with a barrel vaulted roof, from which the chains of the two portcullises were hung ; as at Carnarvon, these portcullises were drawn up into the chapel, and the western one must have quite blocked the west door of the chapel unless part of the grate was hinged to open. The chapel has a lancet window on the east, which has been heavily barred, and a piscina on the south ; it is flanked by two narrow rooms, each having a small opening towards the chapel, and narrow oblique windows to the east. On the second floor is a precisely similar chapel, except that it has no vault. The chimneys of the gatehouse were grouped in two stacks, each consisting of four large circular stone shafts ; the remains of the southern group still form a conspicuous feature. The roofs of the gatehouse were leaded and of very low pitch or flat, and the wall tops here and throughout the castle were embattled. The parapets have for the most part been destroyed, but enough is left on the gatehouse to show their height, and the plan of the embrasures on the towers. The stair turrets rise above the wall tops and have a plain corbel course below the battlements ; the lead roofing on all the wall tops here and elsewhere in the castle seems to have been bedded on sand and cast in the position it was to occupy. This is borne out by entries in the accounts for brushwood for the plumbers and for carrying clay and sand up on to the towers for their use.

A large part of the area of the INNER WARD is taken up by broken walls and foundations, all that now remains of the domestic buildings which abutted on the curtain walls.

On the right the foundations of a building are to be seen against the north curtain, and among them the remains of an oven ; they probably mark the site of the BAKEHOUSE, etc. There are obvious signs of an alteration in the plan of this building, and in its later state it must have partly—if not completely—blocked the approach to a POSTERN in the curtain wall. A window opening east of this postern has been closed.

Inside the building, underneath a narrow light in the curtain, and curiously placed partly within the thickness of the wall, is the WELL. Its unusual situation is partly to be accounted for by the fact (which can be clearly seen at this point) that after the lower portion of the curtain wall had been built it was widened by an additional thickness of masonry on the inside. The south curtain was similarly thickened on its inner face and the west curtain on its outer face (*see* p. 6).

To the west of the bakehouse is the CHAPEL.

This was built with a straight joint against the north curtain, and had a lean-to roof with an arched wood and plaster ceiling beneath it. Its south wall is entirely ruined, but the greater part of both the east and west walls remain, the east window

having been a single lancet. There was a west doorway and another in the south wall.

Next to the chapel in the north-west angle of the courtyard, is a small OPEN COURT in which is the entrance to the CHAPEL TOWER (*see* p. 17). A drain from it leads out into the inner ward, crossing the south-west corner of the chapel.

This court could only have been entered from the chapel or the GREAT HALL which immediately adjoins it to the south.

Next to the hall is the BUTTERY AND PANTRY, separated by an ENTRY from the KITCHEN which fills the south-west angle of the courtyard, and from which the WEATHERCOCK TOWER is entered (*see* p. 17).

The hall, together with its adjacent buildings was exactly modelled on the ordinary dwelling house of the period, and in this as in other castles, was the centre of the domestic life of the garrison; here they had their meals and spent their leisure hours.

At Harlech the plan shows the typical features of such a dwelling, except that instead of the private sleeping and living rooms of the master of the house and his family being in their usual position at the opposite end of the hall to the kitchen, they are represented by the constable's quarters in the gatehouse.

The GREAT HALL is 60 ft. long, including the screens, by 27 ft. wide—not 21 as in the sixteenth century survey—and was lighted by four windows on the west and probably three towards the courtyard, these latter high in the wall because of the pentise outside its east wall. The west windows were provided with seats, and between the second and third of them was the fireplace; this, doubtless, had a stone hood carried on brackets, but all the face work here has been destroyed. At the eastern end of the north wall was a doorway leading into the open court; and so to the chapel and the chapel tower. In the north-west corner is an oven, a late addition, and at the south end was the passage through the SCREENS, with doors opening into the court yard and the middle ward. The position of the screens is shown on the plan, but no trace has been left in the masonry. From them a chamber opens southward, which served as BUTTERY AND PANTRY. This was lighted by a low window in the curtain and had in its north-east angle a newel stair leading to a room above, and doubtless also to the gallery over the screens—which may, however, have formed a single chamber with the room, as there is a window in the curtain at the point where the partition between room and gallery would naturally have been placed. The south side of the window has been partly blocked

by masonry. At a later date, a flight of stone steps was built in the courtyard to give access to this upper room.

South of the buttery was the ENTRY to the kitchen, having doors in its north, south and east walls and a window in the curtain, similar to those in the hall; this served as a lobby to the KITCHEN, which occupied the rest of the space on this side of the court, up to the south curtain. No traces of its fireplace have survived, and its windows towards the west are blocked. There has been a wide bench against the north wall and a sink in the north-east angle, connecting with a drain which takes the rain-water from the court, and runs southward and westward under the curtain wall. A door in the east wall led into a passage, which continued the line of the pentise, and another leads into the Weathercock Tower.

From the south door of the chapel a PENTISE or covered walk ran along the east side of the whole of this range of buildings. When, however, the outside stair already noticed was constructed the walk would have been blocked. The traces of a wall running eastward across the courtyard from the stair suggest that a second walk may have been made here to provide a covered way from the gatehouse to both hall and kitchen.

YSTUMGWERN HALL. Against the south curtain, next to the kitchen, are the remains of a building measuring 15 ft. by 42 ft.; the corbels for its roof remain in the south wall. This is the site of what is called in the survey "Styngwerne-halle," and is of exceptional interest as giving an indication of the size of the hall of Llywelyn, the last Prince of Wales, which was moved from his residence at Ystumgwern, four miles away, and set up here when the castle was built. It was evidently a timber building, and its main framing and roof trusses were doubtless set up without alteration, but new windows and louvres were added, as well as a buttery and pantry. To the east of this hall was the GRANARY and under the granary a CELLAR; steps down to this still remain together with the start of an external stone stair to the granary which was entered through a porch at the head of the stair.

A building formerly existed against the east curtain—some corbels of its roof remain—but its purpose is not known.

Joining the north-east angle of Ystumgwern Hall to the flight of steps leading up to the gatehouse stair are the foundations of a wall, which had a door at its southern end, and would have cut off the south-east part of the courtyard.

From the south-east angle of the courtyard the GARDEN TOWER, also called the Mortimer Tower (*see p. 17*) should

be ascended—the thickening of the south curtain can be clearly seen at the doorway. The wall tops may be reached by the left-hand branch of the stair, which, after rising for some 10 ft. in the thickness of the wall of the tower, turns north and is then carried westward on corbels up the face of the tower wall. By walking round the wall tops past the WEATHERCOCK and CHAPEL TOWERS to the PRISON TOWER (which contains a stair down to the courtyard) a good idea may be obtained of the plan of an Edwardian Castle, the arrangements of the domestic buildings within the courtyard, and the scheme of the encircling defences.

The view is extraordinarily fine, and includes the Lleyn Peninsula and Criccieth Castle on the other side of Tremadoc Bay, and, to the north, the Snowdon range.

The four corner towers probably provided accommodation for the garrison and when necessary for prisoners, while the basements would have been used for storage.

The GARDEN (Mortimer) and PRISON (Debtors') TOWERS, at either end of the east front of the castle, are alike in several respects. Each has a round basement room lighted only by a narrow slit, and entered originally through a trap door in the floor of the room over it. The two upper storeys have rooms of irregular shape, approached by stairs in the thickness of the wall, instead of the more usual newel stairs, and their parapets and roofs were reached by outside stairs from the wall walks on the curtains. The windows are single square-headed lights of moderate size, and the fire-places have had stone hoods. There is direct access from the wall walks to the upper rooms of the towers, and from these rooms, by means of the wall walks, to the upper rooms of the gatehouse. The curtain between the Garden Tower and the gatehouse contains the garderobes serving the south side of the gatehouse, and is thickened on the inside in a curious manner, the wall setting back in a long slope above the thickening; the garderobes on the north of the gatehouse are set across the angle of junction between the curtain and the north tower of the gatehouse, and no thickening of this curtain has been needed. At a later date a shaft of masonry was added below their openings, screening these down to the ground level. The Prison Tower garderobes were similarly treated.

The other pair of towers, the WEATHERCOCK (Bronwen) and CHAPEL (Armourer's) TOWERS, though superficially like the eastern pair, are very differently arranged, and as already noted, belong to the second building scheme, to which the thickening of the north, south and west curtains is due. They are entered from the ground level and have newel stairs rising to the full height of the towers and ending in round turrets like those on the gatehouse; there is no access from the wall walks to these towers. They have a basement, and three storeys above it; the rooms are pentagonal and all of one size, there being no offsets at the floor levels. The windows, though single lights only, are of fair size, facing seawards above the steep slopes of the castle rock, where

they would have been reasonably safe from attack. The garderobes of the Weathercock Tower are at the angle of the south curtain, corbelled out on the wall face; at a later date they were screened by a shaft of masonry as in the case of those north of the gatehouse. The garderobes of the Chapel Tower are included in a buttress which is part of the original work, but of two dates, the lower part belonging to the first work of the castle, the rest coeval with the tower.

The narrow MIDDLE WARD rises from the castle ditch on the east and south, and has low walls and ramparts closely surrounding the inner ward; it was embattled, and remains of the arrow slits in the parapets are yet to be seen. On the north it has a gateway flanked by rounded turrets leading to the outer ward, and on the south a single turret, corbelled back below, containing a garderobe shaft opening towards the ditch. To the west of this turret is a wall across the ward, in which is a doorway, and another wall crossed the eastern section at the southern tower of the outer gate.

The OUTER WARD is bounded by an embattled wall furnished with loop-holes and a wall walk. This starts from the north-east corner of the middle ward, opposite the Prison Tower, and follows the line of the rock-edge, gradually descending to a point near the base of the rock, where is the WATER GATE, the outer gate of the "weye from the marshe" of the sixteenth century survey. This gate had a drawbridge and an upper chamber, and from it a steep cobbled way leads up along a natural ledge on the west face of the rock, protected by the wall, to the UPPER GATE, which had a pit crossed by means of a wooden bridge and a hinged platform. From this point the wall still ascends, following the edge of the rock, until it joins the middle ward opposite the Weathercock Tower.

The wall varies considerably in character. The first stretch adjoining the Prison Tower, down to the gateway leading from the outer ward into the moat, had a stepped wall walk behind an embattled parapet, direct access to which was obtained from the middle ward. Beyond the gate the walk is continued on a later thickening of the wall until the eastern angle of the ward is reached; here the wall becomes slighter, standing as it does on the edge of a precipice, and then for a space ceases to exist. It begins again where the rock slopes take the place of the sheer precipice, and the lower part just above the marsh is high and strongly fortified.

Between the two gateways, where access from below would be difficult, the wall becomes a mere screen pierced at intervals by loops, but the last stretch, adjoining the junction with the middle ward, is more stoutly built, being accessible from the moat.

Traces of a stone stair, leading up to the middle ward, exist at the junction, and there is also a doorway to the moat. There is another way up into the middle ward at the re-entering angle south-west of the Chapel Tower; this may have been the main entry from the way from the marsh, or was possibly intended to provide access to the two masonry platforms which are built on the rock in front of the west side of the castle, and were "in times paste used to plant ordinaunce uppon," as the sixteenth century survey says. This part of the outer ward, then known as "the Middle Postern," was apparently cut off from the rest of the outer ward, "the Outer Postern," by a wall running north-west in front of the Chapel Tower, down to the edge of the precipitous rock.

The purpose of the way from the Marsh was undoubtedly to secure direct and safe access to the harbour or landing place, which, as is clear from mediaeval references, must have been at the foot of the rock. Throughout the active history of the castle the harbour was of vital importance, as the sea provided the most easy and natural—sometimes the only possible—means of communication with the bases of supply.

The present appearance of the marsh makes it difficult to realize that a harbour once existed at this spot. There is reason to believe, however, that the river Dwyrdd, which now flows directly into the head of the bay, formerly ran across the marsh at the foot of the high ground, passed close under the castle rock, and fell into the sea some little distance to the south-west of it.











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